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*The Doctrine of TRANSUBSTANTIATION clearly and fully
confuted from common Sense; from the unerring Attestation
of the Senses; from the indubitable Maxims of Philosophy;
from the Proofs of our Saviour's Miracles, vouched by him-
self; and from the Words of his Mouth again and again
repeated and attested by St. Paul and three Evangelists:*

A
S E R M O N

ON

M A T T. XXVI. Ver. 26, 27, 28.

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L O N D O N,

Printed for W. JOHNSTON, in Ludgate-street.

MDCCLXVI.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE absurdity of this doctrine hath been often urged and declared; but its abhorrence from the genius and figurative manner in which our Saviour sets forth the main principles of the Gospel, hath never, that I know of, been sufficiently urged, cleared, and illustrated; and above all, the express contradiction of this doctrine to the plain and repeated declarations of Jesus Christ, hath never been exposed and proved.

All this, I confide, is done in this discourse, and, I hope, to the full satisfaction of every candid reader.

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THE Editors of the *Register* have been often urged and exhorted, but without success, from the general and dignified manner in which our country has received the appearance of the Gospel, that it is now, that I know of, the only one, clearly urged, cleared, and illustrated, and that all the people, and all the churches of the world, the plain and the sophisticated, the ignorant and the learned, have never been so united and provoked.

All this I consider to be done in the *Register*, and I hope, that the *Register* will be a great aid to the reader.

St. MATTHEW, XXVI. 26, 27, 28.

AND AS THEY WERE EATING, JESUS TOOK BREAD,
AND BLESSED IT, AND BRAKE IT, - AND GAVE IT
TO HIS DISCIPLES; AND SAID, TAKE, EAT, THIS
IS MY BODY.

AND HE TOOK THE CUP, AND GAVE THANKS, AND
GAVE IT TO THEM, SAYING, DRINK YE ALL OF IT.
FOR THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,
WHICH IS SHED FOR MANY, FOR THE REMISSION
OF SINS.

THE Reformed Churches of the Christian world have a long and important controversy upon these words of our Saviour, at his last Supper, in the institution of the Sacrament; the Church of Rome insisting that they should be understood according to the strict literal signification; and we, that they should be understood, not according to the literal interpretation, but according to the true meaning and intention of the speaker, in expressions which are plainly figurative.

Now this was a way of speaking which was familiar to the Jews in many instances, particularly, in calling the feast of the Paschal Lamb, the Passover; which was well understood as a memorial of the destroying Angel's passing over the houses of the children of Israel, marked with the lamb's blood, unhurt, on the same night on which he destroyed the first-born of every other house in Egypt.

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Now

Now the word *Passover*, figuratively understood, as a memorial of this event, is plainly intelligible; but if attempted to be literally understood otherwise, will be found absurd as the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Let me observe, that this was also a way of instructing which our blessed Saviour much practised, and in which he greatly delighted: give me leave then to explain it briefly.

A figure of speech is a change of words from their literal meaning, to one that hath an analogical resemblance to the thing spoken of, and is, at the same time, short, clearly intelligible, and instructive.

This will best be explained by two figurative expressions used by our blessed Saviour, and explained by himself: St. *John's* Gospel, ch. x. 1st. and following verses, Jesus discoursing, and instructing the people about him, considers himself as a shepherd, and his church as a sheepfold, ver. 1, 2, 3. which, when they did not readily understand the parable, he further explains it to them in this manner:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep: all that ever came before me, are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them; I am the door, by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.

Our blessed Saviour is the door, not only to admit men into his sheepfold, that is, his Church militant here, but likewise into his Church triumphant in Heaven.

Again, chap. xv. ver. 1, 2. *I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman;—Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away, and every branch that beareth*

beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Now I appeal to every man of common sense, whether our Saviour doth not in these two parables clear and express his own true character, in as full and instructive a manner as if the ablest philosopher had written volumes upon the design and intention of his coming into the world.

Let me add, that in all good and masterly writings, figurative expressions are frequent, and, if judiciously constructed, are remarkably pleasing and instructive, when construed according to the true intention of the figure; but if, when literally construed, they are absurd, false, and uninforming, we must necessarily conclude that such a meaning was never intended by the author, and consequently, that such an interpretation is to be abhorred and detested.

Now this is strictly the case with regard to the institution of the Sacrament by our blessed Saviour.

The words of *St. Paul*, in the 11th chap. of his first epistle to the *Corinthians*, will sufficiently explain this.

These words contain the history and purpose of our blessed Saviour's last Supper, as he himself delivered it to that apostle; and are, in effect, a short comment upon that transaction, as it is related by *St. Matthew* in the 26th chapter of his gospel, ver. 26, 27, 28.

Ver. 26. *Jesus took Bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body.*

St. Paul says, ver. 23 and 24 of that chapter: *The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread,*

bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body which is broken for you ; this do in remembrance of me?

We see then that what St. Matthew says literally, *This is my body*, St. Paul explains by, *This is my body which is broken for you*. Now can any thing be clearer, than that St. Paul did not understand our Saviour as speaking of his body merely as such, but of his body as he was to suffer upon the cross ; a suffering which he always desired to be remembered by his followers.

This is to me so clear, that no comment that I can imagine can make it clearer ; for what meaning can be plainer to common sense than this, that when Christ had determined to give up his body, a sacrifice for the sins of the world, to be broken upon the cross, as it was there actually broken up, and his blood spilled by the spear thrust into his side, he determined, that the breaking of bread, and the pouring out of wine, upon solemn occasions, should be a perpetual memorial of that his sacrifice to all his followers, and an emblem to put them in mind of it till his coming again ; that is, to the end of the world.

And how was it possible that his meaning could be more clearly or fully expressed, than by saying, when he brake the bread, *Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you ; this do in remembrance of me?* Which was, in effect, saying, Let this be a memorial to you of my body, which is to be broken upon the cross for you.

Now suppose he had made use of these very words, or any other words to that purpose, could he express their meaning more clearly, or fully, than in those very words

words he made use of, *Do this in remembrance of me?*

Again, St. *Matthew* says, that *Jesus* took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, *Drink ye all of this? for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.*

St. *Paul* says, ver. 25. He took the cup, saying, *This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me; that is, it is a memorial of the new testament, or new covenant, founded in my blood; i. e. which I have entered into, to offer up my blood a sacrifice to the divine justice, to atone for the sins of mankind! And what imaginable ground is there in all this for transubstantiation? for it is plain enough, that if the wine was transubstantiated into any thing, it was into a new testament; which is absurd and unintelligible: but our Saviour has made us safe enough from this or any other suspicion, by assuring us it was still wine. Matt. chap. xxvi. ver. 29.*

29. *But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until the day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom.*

Hence it is plain, that it was still wine, after he had given thanks, and after he had given it to his disciples.

How shocking then, how forced and monstrous an interpretation would it be, to suppose that he meant that they should literally drink blood, in contradiction to the express commands of God, who had before fully and frequently forbidden that practice.

And he further explains his intention in chap. xi. 1st Ep. Cor. ver. 26. *For as often as ye eat this bread*

and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

What can be plainer, than that this sacramental bread and wine were meant to be emblems and memorials of *Christ's* death, to the end of the world ?

Indeed, common sense says so very plainly ; but the Church of Rome says otherwise ; that the expressions are neither figurative nor emblematical, but strict literal truth ; that when he called the bread and wine his body and blood, they actually became his real body and blood.

Let this be tried by a similar test.

If by calling the *bread* and *wine* his *body* and *blood*, they actually became so ; then, by calling himself a *door*, he actually became so ; and, by pronouncing himself *the true vine*, he actually became a real vine.

To this it may be answered, that the expression, in both cases, is plainly figurative ; because, literally understood, it would be absurd and false, and against the plain evidence of all the senses.

And does not the same reason hold as strongly against the *bread and wine* becoming *flesh and blood*, upon his calling them so in the sacrament ? Is not this clearly contradictory to the evidence of all the senses ?

More than this, his directing his disciples, at the same time, to eat one and drink the other, implies a command most shocking to humanity ! and contrary to God's express commands in other scriptures, and monstrous beyond example of any but a few, and those perhaps fabled, heathens and barbarians ; yet none of these have ever (that I remember) been reported to eat human bodies alive.

In the preceding quotations from Scripture, *bread and wine*, according to the interpretation of the Church of Rome, are converted into *body and blood*: but in the sixth chapter of St. *John's* gospel, by a clear parity of reason, our Saviour's whole person, body and soul, are converted into bread.

35. *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me, shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst. And again,*

Ver. 47. *He that believeth on me, hath everlasting life.*

48. *I am the bread of life. And again,*

Ver. 51. *I am the living bread which came down from Heaven, if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

In the 35th verse, he explains this eating and drinking, by coming to him, and believing on him, by which the soul receives as true life eternal, as the mortal body does mortal life by bread and wine; an interpretation which *Christ* gives himself of it in the 54th verse.

54. *Who so eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.*

And it is remarkable, that when many were offended at these figurative expressions, *of eating his flesh and drinking his blood*, as if he meant literal eating and drinking of them, he explains himself thus;

Ver. 64. *It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

Now these words are a clear declaration to this purpose.

Do not imagine I speak to you of animal food, of eating flesh, literally; such eating would be of no advantage to you, the flesh profiteth nothing: I speak to you of spiritual food, and spiritual life; the words that I speak to you, they are spirit, and they are life.

To talk of the food of the mind, is, I believe, a figurative way of speaking, familiar to all languages; I am sure it is so to our own.

Milton's reasoning upon the analogy of mental food to bodily, is, to my thinking, one of the finest things in his finest poem:

For knowledge is as food, and asks no less
Her temp'rance over appetite, to know,
In measure, what the mind may best contain:
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.

It must be owned, that our Saviour speaks of eating flesh, in the passage now quoted from the sixth chapter of *St. John*, in a figure apparently strange and hard: yet not more so than that of being born again, in his discourse with *Nicodemus*, in the third chap. of the same gospel.

Ver. 3. *Jesus answered, and said unto him, Verily verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Ver. 4. *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

Ver. 5. *Jesus answered, Verily verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Ver. 6.

Ver. 6. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.*

Now, in my humble opinion, spiritual food is as easy and intelligible a figure, as spiritual birth.

From all these reasonings of our blessed Saviour, I think it evident that all his expressions of eating and drinking his body and blood, mean only the spiritual receiving of him and his doctrine into our hearts and souls ; and not a literal, of his flesh into our bodies : and this truth is, I think, fairly deducible from his own words ; ver. 47, 48. of this chapter.

Ver. 47. *Verily verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

Ver. 48. *I am that bread of life.* And finally, what puts it beyond all doubt, is verse 35, in his own words now quoted ; from hence I think it clear, that believing in *Christ* is eating the bread of life.

I shall beg leave to add, though I cannot think it necessary, that if God had ever intended that blood should be drank, and flesh eaten raw, it surely would have been the flesh and blood of the lamb in the passover, which was a type of *Christ*, through whose blood mankind were delivered from the power of the destroying angel ; who is also called our passover, 1 Cor. chap. v. ver. 7. and in Rev. v. 6, 8, 9.

Called the lamb who was slain, and redeemed the world.

Ver. 9. *For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*

And yet in this paschal lamb, which was a type of our Saviour, the blood was emptied from his blood vessels, into a bason, *Ex. xii. 22.* and the flesh expressly forbidden to be eaten raw; whereas Christians who believe transubstantiation, make themselves and their religion obnoxious to the vilest reproaches of Turks, Jews, and infidels! Nay, expose themselves to a much heavier reproach than that thrown upon the Egyptians by their heathen brethren, of feeding upon human flesh raw, at the same time that they abstained religiously both from their animal, and even their vegetable gods*: nay, these men detested the thoughts of eating the beasts whom they deified, even when drest; as appears from the 43d chap. of *Genesis*, where we are told, *the Egyptians might not eat Bread with the Hebrews, for that was an abomination to the Egyptians*: and the reason assigned by learned men, and doubtless the true one, is, because the Jews ate of these creatures which the Egyptians deified, and therefore refused to eat them, although the horror of eating them raw was removed.

To examine this doctrine of Transubstantiation yet further:

Let us remember, that it is a maxim received as indubitable, that if the organs be sound, and the objects at a due distance to be well examined, the evidence of the senses is unerring.

* Porrum & cepe nefas violare & frangere mori-
lanatis animalibus abstinet omnis.
Mensa; nefas illic fetum jugulare capellæ,
Carnibus humanis vesci licet.

It is a maxim received as indubitable in philosophy, that no body can be in two places at one and the same time; but if the doctrine of Transubstantiation be true, our blessed Saviour's body may be in ten thousand places at the same time, and in the most remote regions, if priests enough may be had to consecrate the elements; and not only so, but his whole body must be in the priest's hands and in Heaven, and in ten thousand mouths, at the same time; and if in ten thousand, why not in ten millions? This is, in effect, to give body ubiquity; that is, in effect, to make it God; for ubiquity is an incommunicable attribute of God.

But they answer, by owning that all this cannot be naturally, but may be miraculously; as the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes.

I answer again, this action was indeed miraculous, because it was a new creation; and nothing but he that created bodies could multiply them; but no miracle ever worked contradictions. Body is limited in its nature, and confined to one place at one time, and no body can be here and elsewhere at the same time, for that would be to suppose it here, and not here, at the same time: hence it is that philosophers scruple not to pronounce, that God himself cannot work contradictions; because such works would be foolish and delusive, and fitted only to deceive; and, in reality, would be to defeat all the purposes of his own laws; to give falsehood all the attestation of truth, and error all the security of certainty; as if two men should vouch upon oath, that the same persons or things were in two different or distant places at the same time, neither of them could gain credit, the attestation of both might be false, but could not possibly be true.

Again,

Again, if our Saviour's assertion, *This is my body, which is broken for you*, is not figurative, it cannot be literally true, and therefore it can only be figuratively so; for he said this long before his body was taken up to the cross, and there broken up; and when it was in reality sound, and untouched either by spear or nails: and the same body cannot be broken and unbroken at the same time, for that were a clear contradiction.

But the truth is, the manifold absurdities and impossibilities which follow from this doctrine of Transubstantiation, the Church of Rome mattereth not.

For example, it followeth clearly from this doctrine, that the evidence of the senses is no proof of miracles; therefore there is no proof that the water at Cana in Galilee was turned into wine, or that the five thousand were fed with five loaves and two fishes! and yet our Saviour appeals to the evidence of sense for his miracles. St. *John* chap. x. ver. 25.

25. *The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.* And again,

37. *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.*

38. *But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works.*

Surely then, if the evidence of sense is no proof of miracles, it was to no purpose that he appealed to such proofs and such evidence.

But to cut short this controversy about Transubstantiation, the absurdities of which might be endlessly urged and insisted upon.

I shall only add, that the falsehood of it is fully evinced from our Saviour's own mouth, by his pronouncing, that

both the elements of bread and wine were still real bread and real wine, after the consecration, if *St. Paul* be a faithful witness; for he tells us, in the eleventh chapter of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, 23d verse, and following:

I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it: Can the question be reasonably asked, What did he break? Most certainly the bread which he took up, and broke before their eyes; after this he took the cup, which he poured out before their eyes: and no one ever doubted it to be wine; and he himself confirms them to be bread and wine when received, ver. 26, 27, 28.

26. *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup (which all the world allow was a cup of wine) ye do shew the Lord's death till he come; that is, ye exhibit a fair open memorial of it to the end of the world.*

27. *Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup, of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of Christ.*

28. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

So here they are, literally, thrice pronounced *bread* and *wine* at the time of receiving them, that is, after the consecration; and that surely is proof enough against transubstantiation! But if any doubt should be raised about the *wine*, because that very word is not here mentioned, let me add, besides what has been urged, that the cup consisted of that liquor, three Evangelists are witnesses that *Christ* himself pronounced it the fruit of the vine, at the same time of drinking it. *Matt. xxvi. 29.*

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom: this he said after he had directed them all to drink of it.

Mark xiv. 25. Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God: this he said after they had all drank of the cup.

Luke xxvi. 19. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come.

And this, the Evangelist expressly tells us, was not done till he had taken the cup, and given thanks, and gave it to his disciples.

The conclusion from all this is short and clear: If the doctrine of Transubstantiation be true, it is so in contradiction to common sense, and the attestation of all the senses of which the sacramental bread and wine are objects; in confutation of maxims in philosophy hitherto received as indubitable; in confutation of all the proofs of our Saviour's miracles (and in manifestation of his own weakness in appealing to them as proofs); in confutation of St. Paul's testimony of *Christ's* having pronounced the bread, *bread*, three several times after the consecration; and the testimony of three Evangelists vouching that he called the cup, *the fruit of the vine*, after he had himself given it to his disciples.

I shall trouble the world but with one observation more, and that is, that if the Church which maintains this tenet, and is in a great measure grounded upon it, is now gaining ground, and greatly prevailing in Britain, as is loudly reported, it is a plain proof that the people who call

themselves, and are deemed by many others, the most rational and philosophical nation in Europe, are now departing fast from that character, and taking up what they have hitherto deemed the reverse of it.

On the other hand, if the report be ill-founded, as I trust in God it is, we must conclude it to be a gross calumny, and grievous abuse; as I hope in God it is. As witness my hand,

PATRICK DELANY.

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